

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of determining information regarding at least one printer
5 available to receive a print job from a client computer, comprising:
transmitting a query from the client computer to a server via a network for an
identification of the at least one available printer;
receiving an identification of the at least one available printer from the
server; and
10 downloading a file from the server used to support printing to a selected one
of the at least one available printer.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
calling a general printer driver from an application being executed by the
15 client computer; and
launching a printing agent with the general printer driver, the printing agent
generating the query transmitted from the client computer to the server for the
identification of the at least one available printer.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the general printer driver is
20 a PostScript printer driver.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the downloaded file is a
printer description file and the method further comprises overwriting a generic
25 printer description file with the downloaded printer description file and converting
application specific data to be printed to printer specific data using the downloaded
printer description file.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the generic printer
30 description file is temporarily overwritten until completion of the conversion.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the identification of the at
least one available printer received from the server is a list of printers.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the list of printers includes information from one or more of a physical location, a printer capability and a network address.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising displaying the identification of the at least one available printer for the user to select the selected one of the at least one available printer.

9. A client computer adapted for communication with a network, the network having a server and at least one printer, the client computer having a utility for determining information regarding the at least one printer comprising:

means for transmitting a query to the server via a network for an identification of the at least one available printer;

means for receiving an identification of the at least one available printer from the server; and

means for downloading a file from the server used to support printing to a selected one of the at least one available printer.

10. The client computer according to claim 9, further comprising:
means for calling a general printer driver from an application being executed by the client computer; and

means for launching a printing agent with the general printer driver, the printing agent generating the query transmitted to the server for the identification of the at least one available printer.

11. The client computer according to claim 9, wherein the downloaded file is a printer description file and the client computer further includes means for overwriting a generic printer description file with the downloaded printer description file and means for converting application specific data to be printed to printer specific data using the downloaded printer description file.

12. The client computer according to claim 11, wherein the generic printer description file is temporarily overwritten until completion of the conversion.

5 13. The client computer according to claim 9, wherein the identification of the at least one available printer received from the server is a list of printers including information from one or more of a physical location, a printer capability and a network address.

10 14. The client computer according to claim 9, further comprising means for displaying the identification of the at least one available printer for the user to select the selected one of the at least one available printer.

15 15. A program embodied in computer readable medium to determine information regarding at least one printer available to receive a print job from a client computer, comprising:

code that transmits a query from the client computer to a server via a network for an identification of the at least one available printer;

code that receives an identification of the at least one available printer from the server; and

20 code that downloads a file from the server used to support printing to a selected one of the at least one available printer.

25 16. The program according to claim 15, wherein the program is launched by a general printer driver, the general printer driver called from an application being executed by the client computer in response to a print command entered by a user.

30 17. The program according to claim 16, wherein the general printer driver is a PostScript printer driver.

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18. The program according to claim 15, wherein the downloaded file is a printer description file and the program further comprises code that overwrites a generic printer description file with the downloaded printer description file so that a printer driver can convert application specific data to be printed to printer specific data using the downloaded printer description file.

19. The program according to claim 18, wherein the generic printer description file is temporarily overwritten until completion of the conversion.

20. The program according to claim 15, wherein the identification of the at least one available printer received from the server is a list of printers.

21. The program according to claim 20, wherein the list of printers includes information from one or more of a physical location, a printer capability and a network address.

22. The program according to claim 15, further comprising code that displays the identification of the at least one available printer for the user to select the selected one of the at least one available printer.

23. A program embodied in computer readable medium for execution by a server to enable a client computer to determine information regarding at least one printer available to receive a print job from the client computer, comprising:

code that receives a query from the client computer via a network for an identification of the at least one available printer;

code that transmits an identification of the at least one available printer to the client computer; and

code that transmits a file to the client computer, the file used to support printing to a selected one of the at least one available printer.

24. The program according to claim 23, wherein the downloaded file is a printer description file.

25. The program according to claim 23, wherein the identification of the at least one available printer is a list of printers.

26. The program according to claim 25, wherein the list of printers
5 includes information from one or more of a physical location, a printer capability and a network address.

27. The program according to claim 23, further comprising code that polls network devices to determine the identification of the at least one available printer.

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